

Annual Report 2013

WHAT WE ARE

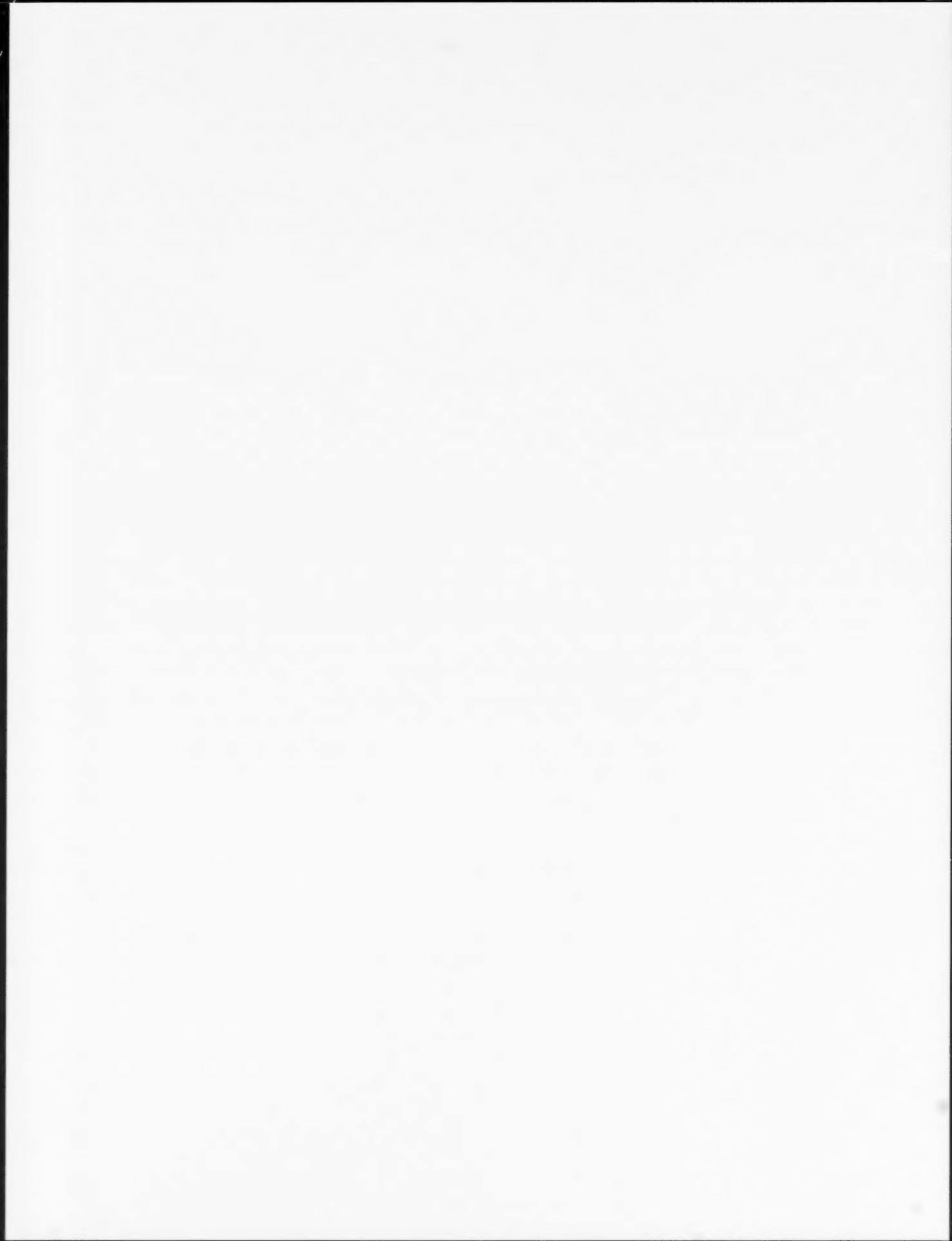
Fair
Independent
Impartial

WHAT WE DO

Negotiate
Review
Mediate

HAS GOVERNMENT BEEN FAIR?







April 2014

The Honourable Dan D'Autremont
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Province of Saskatchewan
Room 129 Legislative Building
2405 Legislative Drive
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0B3

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with section 38 of *The Ombudsman Act, 2012* it is my duty and privilege to submit to you the forty-first annual report of Ombudsman Saskatchewan for the year 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary McFadyen
Ombudsman

Vision, Mission, Values & Goals

Vision

Our vision is that government is always fair.

Mission

Our mission is to promote and protect fairness in the design and delivery of government services.

Values

In pursuit of fairness, we will demonstrate in our work and workplace:

- independence and impartiality
- respectful treatment of others
- competence and consistency
- timely delivery of our services

Goals

Our goals are:

- to provide effective service to individuals, using appropriate methods of service.
- to lead by example, demonstrating fairness in all we do.
- to assess and respond to issues from a system-wide perspective.
- to provide education and training to promote the principles and processes of fairness throughout the province.
- to have a safe, healthy, respectful and supportive work environment.
- to promote, provincially, nationally and internationally, Ombudsman Saskatchewan and the institution of the ombudsman.

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Ombudsman's Observations



Mary McFadyen, Saskatchewan Ombudsman

I am honoured to present the Ombudsman Saskatchewan 2013 annual report and am especially honoured to have been appointed to the role of Ombudsman for this province.

I am originally from Saskatchewan and am returning home after working elsewhere in Canada for 20 years, most recently in Ottawa. Like so many others who have returned or who have decided to move here, I am part of a population growth of over 100,000 people in the last six years. With this kind of growth comes opportunities and challenges, including increased demands on government services. The government has a responsibility to meet these demands and the Ombudsman's office has a role in ensuring that it does. My experience in public administration and in the Department of National Defense and Canadian Forces Ombudsman's Office will support the office here in

fulfilling that role. Together, we will help ensure that government meets the challenge of delivering services fairly to all Saskatchewan residents.

The Saskatchewan Ombudsman is held in high regard throughout the ombudsman community, both nationally and internationally. I will serve this role with integrity and impartiality, and will make certain that this well-deserved reputation is maintained.

A Look Back...

The work of the office in 2013 is the result of an evolution that spans the past nine years. It is characterized by a focus on being proactive: from setting service standards within the office to defining fairness principles; from expecting best practices of government to making recommendations that improve services for many

people. This section provides an overview of the office in 2013 and some of the evolutionary steps that have brought us to where we are today.

Reviewing Our Own Services

At the beginning of his first term in 2004, the previous Ombudsman, Kevin Fenwick, looked at the services the office was providing. In doing so, he built on a concept that had been introduced by his predecessor, Barbara Tomkins: Alternate Case Resolution (ACR). This concept provided an alternative to the traditional role of investigation by helping people re-establish lines of communication with government service providers. The concept of ACR evolved into Appropriate Case Resolution: the philosophy that the office has a range of services, of which any and all may be used – whatever is appropriate for the situation.

Along with this holistic approach to service came a focus on timeliness. A backlog of cases was brought up to date and the office set a goal to close 90% of files within 90 days and 95% of files within 180 days: a standard that has been met or exceeded since 2009. The office also conducted a Lean review of its intake and review services, which resulted in several efficiencies.

Raising the Bar

In addition to looking inward, the office looked outward to the services provided by government agencies. Rooted in the concept that people have come to expect more of government services, the Ombudsman let it be known that he was raising the bar. No longer would it suffice for government to meet a base standard of fairness; if the Ombudsman thought a government service could have done a better job, he would say so. Along with this increased expectation came a change in language that shifted the focus from what went wrong to what could have been done better. As a result, the office began using new case closure terms, such as Situation Improved, Resolved, Not Resolved and Recommendations Made.

Raising the bar brought an emphasis on best practices and the office sought to educate government about its expectations, especially about fairness. The office found that Christopher Moore's satisfaction triangle¹ transitioned well into a fairness triangle that defined three aspects of fairness: What was decided? How was it decided? How was I treated? These three questions provided a springboard for talking with government about making and communicating decisions that affect the public. The concept of fairness, the application of policy, and strategies for interacting positively with the public formed the basis for a "Fine Art of Fairness"

workshop. The workshop was piloted in 2006 and has grown in demand throughout the Saskatchewan public service. By the end of 2013, over 2,000 participants had attended. Interest in the workshop has grown among other ombudsman offices too. In 2013, staff from the offices of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, the Taxpayers' Ombudsman, the Procurement Ombudsman and the Office of the Correctional Investigator attended the workshop. The International Ombudsman Association has also extended an invitation, and our staff will present the workshop at its annual convention in Denver in 2014.

Cooperative Influence

Offering workshops is just one of the ways the office seeks to be proactive about fair decision-making. Another, which is often employed during casework, is the principle of cooperative influence. Rather than tell the decision-makers and individuals involved what they should do, Ombudsman staff seek to work with them to develop best practices. This enables those who are most affected by the decisions to provide their valuable expertise and points of view. As a result, the solutions arrived at are more readily adopted and many concerns are resolved without the need for formal recommendations.

Systemic Reviews

Individual casework has always been an important part of the office's

mandate, and some issues that are raised by one or more individuals can also lead to a systemic review. Broader in nature, these reviews often affect policy and can improve situations for many people. From 2007 to 2012, the office published five systemic reviews and a major review for a total of six public reports. In 2013, another systemic review was underway, which will be completed in 2014.

As a result of both the co-operative influence model and systemic work, there have been a number of examples in recent years where one or more complaints have resulted in improvements for many. Here are just a few examples:

- "Assignment of Rights" (individual file) – When a person gets a job and stops receiving social assistance, the Ministry of Social Services needs to cancel any assignment of rights related to maintenance payments and may need to provide a refund. We received a complaint about a delay in these two steps. When we notified the Ministry of our intent to review, they proactively addressed the matter with a Lean process and the timeliness improved significantly.
- *A Matter of Time* (systemic review) – A woman contacted us because she was worried that she might not receive chemotherapy in a timely manner after a mastectomy – and she could not get satisfactory information about where she was on

"...there have been a number of examples in recent years where one or more complaints have resulted in improvements for many."

1. Moore, Christopher (2003). *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

the wait list or when she would be able to meet with an oncologist. We reviewed the administration of the wait list and made recommendations to improve the process. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency accepted these recommendations and voluntarily made additional improvements.

- *Achieving the Right Balance* (systemic review) – A government employee's request to run for municipal office was refused because of an outdated conflict-of-interest policy. At the Minister's request, we reviewed the policy and made short and long-term recommendations to modernize the policy for all public servants in Saskatchewan.
- "Too Wet to Seed" (individual file) – As a result of one farmer's complaint, we conducted a review and made a recommendation to the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation that improved the way "too wet to seed" claims were assessed.
- *Hearing Back* (systemic review) – We had been receiving complaints about delays in booking hearings with administrative tribunals and in decisions being handed down afterwards. We conducted a review of six tribunals as a sample set and made recommendations for over 50 tribunals across the province. Additionally, we developed a desktop guide on good decision-making and worked with the Dispute Resolution Office to arrange courses on this topic.

Fairness Lens Reviews and Other Forms of Input

Even more proactive than making recommendations are opportunities to provide input during the early stages of decision-making. The office started offering Fairness Lens Reviews and several ministries and agencies

"As citizens continue to contact us with their concerns, we look forward to bringing these matters forward and assisting in the discovery of proactive and effective solutions..."

have requested these. From time to time, the office has also been invited to provide comments or feedback to various government commissions and legislative change processes. In 2013, for example, the office provided input to the Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan Commissioner.

In 2009, this office also provided feedback to the Patient First Review Commissioner. At that time, among the other health issues under review, was a question about whether to establish a separate ombudsman for health. We already had jurisdiction in this area and, in the end, were funded for a health team and worked to increase public awareness about our role in health. This has led to an increase in health complaints and opportunities for us to have a role in a number of improvements in health administration.

In 2013, we also saw the impact of legislative changes that came into force in late 2012. For example, under *The Ombudsman Act, 2012*, additional health entities are now within our jurisdiction, including provincially-funded institutions or homes that have residents in care. These residences have a responsibility to let people in their care know about the Ombudsman and in 2013, the office developed brochures that they could provide to their residents – both in care homes and in provincial correctional centres.

In addition, the office continued to inform the public of its availability in a number of ways, including advertising, presentations and online updates. One of the groups we have worked to connect with is young adults. As a result, work has continued with high schools and post-secondary institutions, including participation in the 2013 Student Leadership Conference attended by about 700 students each year.

The activities described here are just a sample of the work of the office in 2013 and some of the changes that have brought us to where we are today. As government works to serve the needs of a growing population, our office must continue to adapt and evolve. As citizens continue to contact us with their concerns, we look forward to bringing these matters forward and assisting in the discovery of proactive and effective solutions that will benefit many.

Complaints from Individuals



When individuals believe a government ministry or agency has been unfair to them, they are often able to raise the issue and work out a resolution with the office involved. Unfortunately, there are also times when resolutions do not come about so easily. Sometimes, for example, policies are applied too rigidly, clear explanations are lacking, or people on both sides become hardened in their respective positions.

Whatever the case, by the time people contact us, they are often frustrated and in addition to looking for a solution, also want someone to listen. Listening is our first step in beginning to understand the situation. From there, we determine whether the issue fits within our mandate and which of our services will be the most useful.

We may provide information and coaching so the person can return to

the situation and work it out or pursue an avenue of appeal not yet tried. We may facilitate communication between parties who are no longer talking to each other or who are having trouble understanding each other. We may work with all the parties involved to bring about an agreed-upon resolution. We may conduct a formal review, and may make recommendations to the government ministry or agency.

The solutions that result are often cooperative ones – the result of shared discussions in light of facts, policies, discretionary considerations, fairness principles, best practices, and the interests of the parties involved.

In addition to working towards a fair resolution for the individual involved, this kind of process can also bring about lasting change within government offices so that

similar situations can be prevented or resolved at an earlier stage.

Another more proactive version of this process is also available. When government offices are launching a new program or would like to review an existing one, they can request our fairness lens service. It provides an opportunity to look at services through a fairness perspective, which includes what is decided, how it is decided and how people are treated while those decisions are being made.

Following is a series of case examples that demonstrate the range of our work on individual files – from consultation and early resolutions through to formal reviews and recommendations.

Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of those involved.

Early Resolution



Eligibility for Dental Work

Ministry of Advanced Education

Flora needed dental work. She had been attending a post-secondary institute for about seven months and had been granted supplementary health benefits, but when it came time to get the dental work approved, her request was turned down. She was told that she had to have been receiving benefits for at least six continuous months to be eligible for the dental coverage – and records showed an interruption in her benefits.

After the first semester, Flora had a baby, but she returned to school at the beginning of the second semester and did not miss any classes. During this time, however, she was deemed to have had an interruption in her benefit status. As a result, she was not eligible for dental coverage.

Flora did not think this was fair and contacted our office. We made inquiries with Health and Extended Benefits, Health Registration and Student Services, and found that there were differences in the records on file in different places. Once the discrepancy was brought to light, it was quickly corrected and Flora was now eligible for her dental work.

Status: Resolved

Phone Calls With Mom

Ministry of Justice - Corrections & Policing, Pine Grove Correctional Centre

Faye's mom was in the Pine Grove Correctional Centre and Faye lived with her father and sisters in another part of the province. The girls valued the time they spent on the phone with their mom, but then the calls stopped and their dad was told that calls to their home number were now blocked. Faye didn't think this was fair and called our office.

We contacted the centre and they looked into the situation. Their phone number had been blocked because the centre's phone system had detected three-way calling, which was not allowed. Staff from the centre called Faye's father again to find out more. It turned out that, during the phone calls, Faye and her sisters liked to use the computer to play music for their mom – and the phone system had interpreted this as three-way calling. Staff at the centre explained the situation to the girls' dad so they would know how to avoid triggering the same response. Their mom's calls were then unblocked and they were able to talk with her again.

Status: Resolved



Facilitated Communication

Bridging Communications

Regional Health Authority (name of health authority not provided to help ensure anonymity of complainants)

Gail had been banned from visiting her husband Glen, who was living in a long-term care facility. The two had been together for 50 years and Gail did not think it was fair that she had been unable to visit him for several months. She had sometimes raised concerns about Glen's care but did not understand why she could not visit.

The health region had drawn up an agreement that laid out terms that Gail would need to agree to if she were to resume visiting Glen. She did not trust the region and felt that she could not communicate productively with them – so she was not willing to sign the agreement. Communications had stalemated when she contacted our office.

We decided to facilitate communication between Gail and the health region and learned that there had been a series of incidents in which the staff at the facility had interpreted Gail's behaviour as threatening or abusive. On the other hand, Gail did not see her behaviour in this light and didn't think staff were accepting of her concerns about Glen's care. Glen still wanted Gail to visit him.

We arranged a meeting with Gail and representatives from the health region. Gail expressed her concerns and also learned more about the way her behaviours were being interpreted by staff at the facility, and specifically which behaviours had been considered threatening.

Following the meeting, the health region developed a new agreement that provided Gail with regular time with Glen, limited her access to staff and gave her specific contact people to talk with if she had concerns about Glen's care. She signed the agreement and once again was able to visit with Glen and participate in some of the family-oriented aspects of his care.

The two issues we had identified (access to her spouse and an explanation for the decision) were both addressed.

Status: Resolved

Formal Reviews

Improving Timeliness

Ministry of Social Services - Income Assistance and Disability Services Division, Saskatchewan Assistance Program

When Giselle found a job and no longer needed social assistance benefits, she asked the Ministry to re-establish her access to maintenance payments from her former spouse. During the time she was receiving social assistance benefits, she had assigned her rights to the maintenance payments over to the Ministry. Now she needed to reverse the arrangement. Ministry staff told her the social assistance file would remain open for two months and then would be closed and the assignment of rights cancelled. Following this two-month waiting period, it took almost four months more for the Ministry to provide her a refund for the maintenance payments it had received on her behalf after she started working.

Giselle did not think this was fair and contacted our office. When we assessed the matter, the Ministry was frank with us and told us there was

a backlog in this area. We decided to conduct a review of the matter, not just of Giselle's situation, but of the process in general. The Ministry realized that the process needed work and, during our review, went through a Lean initiative hoping to improve their process. The Ministry told us of this initiative and we agreed to hold off on the review until the initiative was completed.

The Lean initiative had positive results: swifter cancellation of assignments of rights and efficiencies that improved the timeliness of refunds to former clients. The applicable policy changes were communicated to staff and promptly updated and posted on the Ministry's website for both the Saskatchewan Assistance Program and the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability Program.

Issue: timeliness of cancellation of assignment of rights

Status: Resolved

Issue: timeliness of issuing assignment of rights refund after file closure

Status: Situation Improved

I Just Found Out

Ministry of Health - Drug Plan & Extended Benefits

Fern had been receiving dialysis for two years and was on a program where she paid for part of her medication: she had so far paid almost \$5,000. A new pharmacist let her know that her renal medication was covered by the Ministry of Health. She checked to confirm that this was true and that she could be reimbursed retroactively. After she submitted her receipts, however, she was advised that reimbursement was only allowed for up to a year. As a result, the cheque that arrived was for only half the amount she had paid out.



She did not think this was fair and was surprised that none of the medical professionals who had provided her services in the past two years had mentioned the program. She contacted our office.

Following our initial contact with the Ministry of Health, staff reviewed Fern's file again and realized that she was truly not informed about the program until after she had been receiving treatments for two years. As a result, they decided to make an exception and sent Fern a cheque for the remainder of the amount she had paid out for renal medication.

When we looked at the processes in place for informing renal patients about the program, we realized that Fern's situation was unusual. She lived close to another province and had most of her medical treatments there, so the service providers she dealt with were not fully aware of the programs available in Saskatchewan. The service providers in Saskatchewan, however, were well aware of the program and knew when to advise patients of its availability.

Status: Resolved

Tree-Trimming Surprise

SaskPower

Gerry and Felicia had a line of mature trees along one side of their property, most of which were 25-foot high Siberian Elm. They arrived one day to find that 13 of the trees had been cut down to a height of 2.5 – 3 feet. They learned that a SaskPower employee had been responding to a request from a nearby property owner and had mistakenly gone to the wrong address.

The employee apologized and Gerry and Felicia believed they would receive some compensation. Once SaskPower had assessed the situation, however, Gerry and Felicia received a letter indicating that, even though the trees had been cut by mistake, they needed pruning to protect SaskPower's lines and SaskPower had the authority to prune them, so there would be no compensation.

Gerry and Felicia felt that this left a number of unresolved issues, including a loss of privacy, loss of a wind

and snow break, loss of visual appeal, potential loss of property value, and the cost to repair the damage. When they were unable to convince SaskPower to reconsider these issues, SaskPower referred them to our office.

We reviewed the matter and found that the cutting had been done during a pruning ban. A specialist in the Ministry of Environment said that the way the trees had been cut could attract pine bark beetles and potentially spread Dutch elm disease. He said that if the trees had to be cut, they should have been taken all the way down and the stumps either treated or ground out. Following an inspection, the Ministry of Environment provided instructions to SaskPower for cleaning up the area.

SaskPower complied with these instructions and also offered compensation to Gerry and Felicia, which they accepted.

Status: Situation Improved

Formal Reviews – Recommendations Made

Following are summaries of the recommendations we made on individual files closed in 2013.

In Debt for Rent

Ministry of Social Services - Income Assistance and Disability Services Division, Saskatchewan Assistance Program

Gwen was a young adult who required significant care and could not manage her own affairs. She had a trustee who was receiving social assistance payments on her behalf. Gwen became ill and was admitted to hospital for two months. Following that, she was unable to return to her previous residence and was admitted to a care home that could attend to her needs.

As a result of these circumstances, Gwen became indebted to Social Services in two ways. The first was the amount of two months' rent because her trustee did not notify Social Services that Gwen was in the hospital. The Ministry was collecting these funds from Gwen as an overpayment. The second situation was related to rent at the care home. Although Gwen required the kind of care provided at the home, and was eligible for funding through the Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) program, the home was not a CLSD-approved home and there was no other approved space available that could meet Gwen's needs. The funding that was approved for Gwen was not enough to cover the monthly rate at the home and she began accumulating a shortfall.



In the meantime, Gwen had a change of trustees. Her new trustee appealed to the Social Services Appeal Board. The Board approved payment of the shortfall through an emergency advance. This satisfied the care home's need for payment, but Gwen now owed the Ministry for the advance.

Gwen's trustee did not think this was fair and contacted our office. We reviewed the situation and found that in the first instance, the overpayment should have been assessed to the previous trustee, not to Gwen.

In the second instance, Ministry staff believed that they were restricted by policy from providing the full amount of Gwen's rent. We found that the policy was more restrictive than the regulations governing the policy and that there was room within the existing rules to cover the full amount of Gwen's rent at the care home until she could be placed in an appropriate CLSD-approved home.

Recommendations

1. That the Ministry forgive the overpayment assessed against Gwen for the two-month period.

Status: Accepted

In responding to our recommendation, the Ministry found that the amount of the overpayment was also higher than it should have been. It was reduced accordingly and transferred to the previous trustee.

2. That the Ministry forgive the emergency advance assessed against Gwen associated with the payments made to cover the shortfall between Gwen's regular shelter allowance and the actual rent for Gwen's stay at the care home.

Status: Accepted

Looking for Reasons

Highway Traffic Board

The street was icy and rutted when Forrest lost control of his vehicle and ran into a parked car. He submitted a claim to SGI and was found to be at fault for the accident. As a result, he lost six safety points. Forrest believed that he had been driving carefully. He disagreed with the point reduction and decided to appeal the decision to the Highway Traffic Board.

More than seven months later, the appeal was heard. In the meantime, Forrest tried to prepare by finding out what kind of evidence the Board would need to consider. He understood from the Highway Traffic Board's website that he would need to prove that there had been "extenuating circumstances," which were defined as something "out of the ordinary." He found the definition vague and was unable to garner any further details from staff.

When the Board upheld SGI's decision to reduce Forrest's safety points, he did not understand why. He asked for a written decision from the Board, but was not satisfied with the letter he received, so he contacted our office.

Following a formal review, we found that SGI had been overhauling one of its systems, and notices of appeal had been taking up to six months to reach the Highway Traffic Board (five months in Forrest's case) – a delay that we found to be unreasonable. Once the Board received SGI's notice of Forrest's appeal, it took about two months to book the hearing, which went ahead about two weeks later.

Since that time, improvements had been made. Following the system overhaul, SGI's appeal notices were typically reaching the Board in a matter of days and most hearings were then booked within a week or two.



Following each hearing, the Board provides a verbal decision to the appellant. Written decisions are not provided to everyone, but can be requested. Given the volume and nature of the hearings, we found that this practice was not unreasonable. In Forrest's case, the letter he received did not provide the understanding that he was seeking about why his appeal had been denied.

Further details in the Board's files indicated that it found the road conditions were not unusual for that time of year in Saskatchewan and that drivers are expected to exercise due caution. The written decision provided to Forrest did not include this explanation.

While some matters had been resolved for future appellants, we noted that it is important that those who receive written decisions be provided with enough information to help them understand the reasons for the decision. We requested that the Board follow up with Forrest to provide any information that he was still seeking and we made the following recommendation.

Recommendation

1. That the Highway Traffic Board ensures that the written decisions, including safe driver recognition appeals it provides to appellants include:
 - a. a statement of the decision.
 - b. a summary of the information relied upon by the decision-maker.
 - c. an explanation of how any contradictions in the information were reconciled by the decision-maker.
 - d. any other relevant reasons for making the decision.

Status: Accepted

Case Management Processes

Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety - Occupational Health and Safety Division

Frank was severely injured in a workplace accident. Following the accident, he and his father, Grant, tried to get information from the Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHSD) about the investigation into the accident and whether any charges would be laid. They found it difficult to obtain the information they were seeking and about three and a half years later, were informed that the file had been lost. They contacted our office.

Our review considered the following issues:

1. Does the OHSD have adequate file and case management policies and procedures?
2. Was the OHSD investigation adequate?
3. Was the OHSD investigation timely?
4. Did the OHSD provide Frank and Grant with adequate communication and service?
5. Do The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996 adequately regulate the kind of operations Frank worked in?

The OHSD staff were cooperative with our review and said that this particular file had not been handled according to the standards and expectations of the division. One of the resulting problems was that delays and lack of follow-up caused the Crown's ability to prosecute to become statute-barred; that is, it would be too late to lay charges if it was determined that charges should be laid.

We found that a number of OHSD's processes could be improved to prevent this kind of situation from happening again. We also found that the regulations did not speak directly to the kind of operations Frank's former employer had been involved in.

Recommendations

1. That the OHSD institute an Operational Records Management System (ORMS) for tracking its paper-based and electronic documents and files. The ORMS and its implementation should result in a system that is easily understandable by its staff. The development process should include a review and update of the OHSD's practices relating to:
 - file management, so that its filing procedures and other systems result in files and records being easily located and retrieved.
 - the recording of communications to ensure that they are adequately documented and easily retrievable.
 - its inter-agency communications with Public Prosecutions to ensure that its requests for prosecution are followed up in a timely manner, having regard to limitation periods and current best file management practices; and that all resultant communications between the OHSD and Public Prosecutions are properly documented in the OHSD's records.
 - its communications with injured workers, their families, and the other stakeholders regarding its investigations are timely and appropriate.

Status: Accepted

2. That the OHSD train its employees in its ORMS system and ensure its staff use the system consistently.

Status: Accepted

3. That the OHSD approach Public Prosecutions with a view to coming to an agreement regarding how decisions about prosecutions will



be communicated to injured workers and to the families of workers who have died as a result of workplace accidents.

Status: Accepted

4. That the OHSD make it a standard practice to ensure its investigation files include all necessary written consents to release personal health information as completed and signed.

Status: Accepted

5. That the OHSD investigate accidents in which a serious injury has occurred to the same standards as fatal accidents.

Status: Accepted

6. That the OHSD review and update its case management policies and practices regarding the

investigation of fatalities and serious injuries to ensure they meet best practice standards in the field of occupational health and safety incident investigations.

Status: Accepted

7. That the OHSD review and update its supervisory practices to ensure that file progress is monitored and support is provided to officers in carrying out effective investigations.

Status: Accepted

8. That the OHSD review the current OH&S regulations to determine if there are any improvements that should be made to ensure that the safety of drilling operations other than oil and gas drilling, is regulated in accordance with current best industry practices.

Status: Accepted

Considering Reconsidering Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)

Floyd was seriously injured in a workplace accident and was receiving WCB benefits. In addition to the injuries for which he was being compensated, there was an additional type of injury that he believed was caused by the accident. His claim for this was denied, as was his appeal. He did not think this was fair and contacted our office. We conducted a formal review and did not find that WCB's decision was unreasonable. Later, Floyd produced an additional document that appeared to provide new information. As a result, we made the following recommendation.

Recommendation

1. That the Workers' Compensation Board members exercise their authority under subsection 22(3) of *The Workers' Compensation Board Act* and reconvene a Board Appeal Tribunal to reconsider Floyd's claim for benefits based on his additional injuries.

Status: Accepted

The WCB told us that unless there was medical evidence to corroborate the injury mentioned in Floyd's new document, his hearing before the Appeal Tribunal would not be reconvened. We told Floyd this and recommended he submit the document to the WCB. The WCB reviewed it and noted that it contradicted previous evidence provided by Floyd. Since the WCB assessed the new information and determined it was insufficient to reopen Floyd's case, we were of the view that the WCB met the intent of our recommendation, so we consider it accepted.

New Processes for a New College

Saskatchewan College of Midwives

Glenda was living in Saskatchewan and taking midwifery classes through a distance education program outside of Canada. She wanted a student licence to complete a practicum in Saskatchewan and asked the Saskatchewan College of Midwives whether it would recognize her program. The College did not have the resources to assess her program and decide whether it was equivalent to the Canadian programs it did recognize. After considering its options, the College eventually decided not to recognize the program Glenda was taking. She did not think the College's decision or its process had been fair, so she contacted our office.

Before reviewing Glenda's complaint, we noted that our jurisdiction over the College of Midwives was temporary, because its board was appointed by government for the purpose of establishing the College. Once the College transitions to its permanent governance structure, the Ombudsman will no longer have jurisdiction. The Ombudsman also clarified at the outset that our role was to review the College's process in deciding whether to recognize Glenda's foreign training program and not to decide whether the program was equivalent.

Our review found that, as a new organization, the College of Midwives had not previously considered some of the questions that Glenda raised. As a result, it did not have clearly-defined, timely processes in place for making and communicating those decisions and for enabling appeals. We made the following recommendations.

Recommendations:

1. That the Saskatchewan College of Midwives explain its application process to all applicants (students, graduates and education programs, both foreign and Canadian), including providing information about who will make the decision and whether applicants may have the decision reviewed.

Status: Accepted

2. That the Saskatchewan College of Midwives develop and implement a clearly-defined process by which applicants may have their midwifery education programs assessed for equivalency to a Canadian program.

Status: Accepted

3. That the Saskatchewan College of Midwives implement a fair process for the evaluation of educational programs against stated criteria that incorporates the six best practices summarized in our report, *A Question of Fairness: A Review of the Assessment and Collection of Overpayments in the Saskatchewan Assistance Program*.

Status: Accepted

Reviewing the House Rules

Ministry of Justice - Corrections and Policing, Women's Community Training Residence

Our office was contacted in its role as the office for the Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner about the Women's Community Training Residence. Our initial assessment found that the concerns raised were a better fit for our role as the

Ombudsman's office and the file was transferred. We decided to conduct a formal review.

Some low or medium risk inmates at provincial correctional centres may be able to complete their sentences in a community training residence or CTR, which is usually a house. CTR residents are expected to adhere to certain rules and responsibilities, such as taking programming, looking for work, and keeping curfew. In Saskatchewan, there is one CTR for women (the WCTR) and three for men.

We reviewed several areas, including:

- whether key policies and standing orders were consistently applied between the women's and men's CTR.
- the accessibility and flexibility of cultural programming.
- the effectiveness and accessibility of internal appeal mechanisms.
- practices related to dispensing medication.
- the practice of not allowing alterations to a case plan once it is implemented.
- the manner in which security issues and critical incidents are dealt with and reported on, including whether clear policies and procedures are in place and being followed.

During the course of our review, staff at the Ministry and the WCTR were cooperative and provided the information and explanations we requested. In some areas, we found their practices appropriate and in others, we saw a need for change. We met with the leadership and made several suggestions to specific operational policies and standing orders. The Ministry had implemented many of these by the time the review was complete.

Recommendations

1. That the Ministry of Justice review its Correction Division Directive 0041 regarding the fees CTRs are to charge residents to ensure its consistent application across all CTRs.

Status: Accepted

2. That the Ministry of Justice review its divisional directives related to CTR operations to ensure they are fully up to date and relevant to the Ministry's current standards and practices for CTRs.

Status: Accepted

3. That the Ministry of Justice review all local standing orders and practices within the CTRs to ensure they are consistent with the divisional directives.

Status: Accepted

Ministry Response: The Deputy Minister of Corrections and Policing noted that the Ministry's legislation and regulations had recently changed and that his staff were in the process of revising the applicable policies. He indicated that our recommendations would be implemented in conjunction with those revisions.

Avoiding Bias

Workers' Compensation Board

Francis, an employee of the Workers' Compensation Board, made a claim with the WCB as an injured worker. Although the claim was accepted, Francis questioned whether it had been processed in an unbiased manner, and contacted our office.

We conducted a formal review and did not find evidence of bias against Francis. We recognized, however,

that in situations where an employee is also a claimant, there is increased potential for bias and the perception of bias. The WCB expected these types of claims to be processed in an impartial and confidential manner, as outlined briefly in a training manual and noted at a high level in its *Code of Conduct and Ethics*. This information, however, was not widely known throughout the organization and was not addressed in WCB's policy manual.

Recommendation

1. That the Workers' Compensation Board develop a policy to ensure it assesses and manages its employees' claims confidentially without bias or any perception of bias in accordance with the best practices of similar public insurance or benefits administrators.

Status: Accepted

When Finances Change

Ministry of Social Services - Income Assistance and Disability Services Division, Community Living Service Division

Faith's son Flynn has autism spectrum disorder. Flynn's father is no longer living and there is no funding from his estate to assist with Flynn. Faith applied for benefits under the Cognitive Disability Strategy (CDS) and, based on her income, was awarded almost \$800/month.

Faith married George, who was making monthly support payments to assist with the care of his children from another relationship.

When it came time to renew the CDS benefits, the case worker tallied George and Faith's total income and found that they were just over the income threshold to receive CDS support. The benefits stopped.

Unfortunately, this meant that Faith could no longer afford the same supports for Flynn, such as after school programs, so she left her job to stay home with him. At this point, their household income was reduced and they thought they could reapply for CDS benefits. They found that CDS rules stated that income could only be assessed once a year, and that it must be based on line 236 of the Canada Revenue Agency income tax form. Faith did not think this was fair and she did not think it was fair that George's monthly support payments were not subtracted from the income calculation. She contacted our office.

Our review found that, while CDS is flexible in other respects, its means test is not flexible or appealable and the family's income can only be reassessed on an annual basis, even if there are changes during the year.

We questioned whether a means test based solely on one factor (line 236 on the income tax form) was fair when it could not take into account factors such as child support payments. The Ministry noted that the amount on line 236 is a widely accepted means test, applied across several programs in government and ensures a level of equity in the application process.

Even if the means test remained the same, people with cognitive disabilities could lose access to services when financial situations change and may have to wait for months for the annual income reassessment date. We asked the Ministry to consider a more flexible approach.

Recommendations

1. That the Ministry accept a new application from Faith's family and use the current family income to evaluate their eligibility for the program until their next income tax return is supplied.

Status: Accepted

2. That the Ministry amend its current practice to allow for a reconsideration of eligibility of applicants to the Cognitive Disability Strategy program where it is demonstrated that there has been a significant change in their financial circumstances during the course of the year and not rely exclusively on the information contained in the last filed income tax returns.

Status: Accepted

What Would the Average Person Do?

SGI - Auto Claim

When a piece of asphalt struck the undercarriage of his vehicle, Gus slowed down and checked for warning lights. None came on, so he continued down the highway for about 40 minutes. He then pulled into the drive-through lane at a fast-food restaurant and was in line to pay when the low oil pressure light came on. He continued through the line and pulled over across the street.

Gus filed a claim with SGI, and learned that the damage to the undercarriage would be covered. There was also damage to the engine, which SGI would not cover because it determined that Gus had caused the damage by continuing to drive.

Gus believed that he had acted appropriately by pulling over as soon as possible after the warning light came on. He did not agree with SGI's decision and was not satisfied with the explanations he received, so he contacted our office.

We reviewed the matter and looked at whether SGI's decision was reasonable, based on the evidence and what could reasonably be expected

of the average person. For example, would the average person in Gus's situation have stopped to check the vehicle before the warning light came on? One of SGI's technical advisors had noted that the average person would not. Once the warning light came on, the average person would be expected to pull over as soon as was safely and reasonably possible, which Gus did.

We found that Gus did what could be reasonably expected to protect his car from further loss and that the explanations he received had not been sufficient.



Recommendations

1. That SGI pay Gus the cost to repair the damage to the engine of his car as quoted by the dealership.

Status: Accepted

2. That SGI provide denial letters to claimants that include:
 - a. a description of the rights and responsibilities against which SGI assessed their claims.
 - b. an explanation of the facts and reasoning upon which SGI relied to deny their claims.
 - c. information about the claimants' opportunities to have the decision reviewed or to appeal the decision.

Status: Accepted



A Temporary Home

Ministry of Government Relations

Gerard's home was made uninhabitable by a natural disaster so he applied to the Provincial Disaster Assistance Program (PDAP) for temporary relocation assistance. His application was approved. Temporary housing arrangements were not easy to secure, so Gerard considered purchasing a house as a temporary residence. He checked the PDAP guidelines, but did not see any information about how such a purchase might affect the temporary relocation assistance, so he bought a house.

PDAP staff found out two months later. That day, Gerard happened to call about another claim and was told that he was no longer eligible for temporary relocation assistance. He disagreed with their decision and continued to discuss the matter with them. PDAP remained firm in its decision and sent him a letter to this effect. Gerard did not think the decision or the process had been fair and contacted our office.

We reviewed the matter and found that PDAP's decision was in keeping

with the intent of its governing legislation, although the information on this topic was absent from the PDAP guidelines. We also noted that, when he could not find an answer to his question, Gerard did not contact PDAP staff to ask about this before he made his purchase.

PDAP did not provide Gerard with advance notice of the decision to end his temporary relocation assistance. Although Gerard's concerns were reviewed at several levels within the program, he did not make a formal appeal and was not provided with information that he could do this. He had appealed a different PDAP decision, so staff assumed that he knew about this option. Regardless of his past experience, however, he should have been advised of his option to appeal and how to do so. Finally, the letter provided to Gerard did not satisfactorily explain the decision.

While the decisions made in Gerard's case were reasonable, we asked PDAP to make improvements for future applicants.

Recommendations

1. That the program include a statement in the guidelines that acknowledges that the purchase of a house could lead to the discontinuation of temporary relocation allowance and explains why this would occur.

Status: Accepted

2. That the program ensure that advance notice of decisions is provided to claimants so that they have an opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.

Status: Accepted

3. That the program provide training to decision-makers in the writing of decision letters.

Status: Accepted

4. That the program provide notice to all claimants affected by a decision it makes of the claimant's ability to appeal the decision. This notice should include any necessary forms and all information a claimant would need to successfully initiate the appeal process.

Status: Accepted

Accolades

This is our opportunity to recognize some of the public servants who showed a dedication to fairness in 2013. Thank you for making a difference!

Staff

*Financial Services Branch and
Income Assistance Program
Design & Operational Policy,
Ministry of Social Services*

Thank you for using a Lean initiative to improve timeliness of the cancellation of assignment of rights and the refunds related to it.

Larry Pfeifer

Supervisor

Doreen Gane

*Social Assistance Worker,
Ministry of Social Services
– Income Assistance
and Disability Services,
Saskatchewan Assistance
Program*

Thank you for going out of your way to help a deserving candidate qualify for SAID.

Susan Yee

*A/Director, Client Services Unit
and Administration Services,
Ministry of Health*

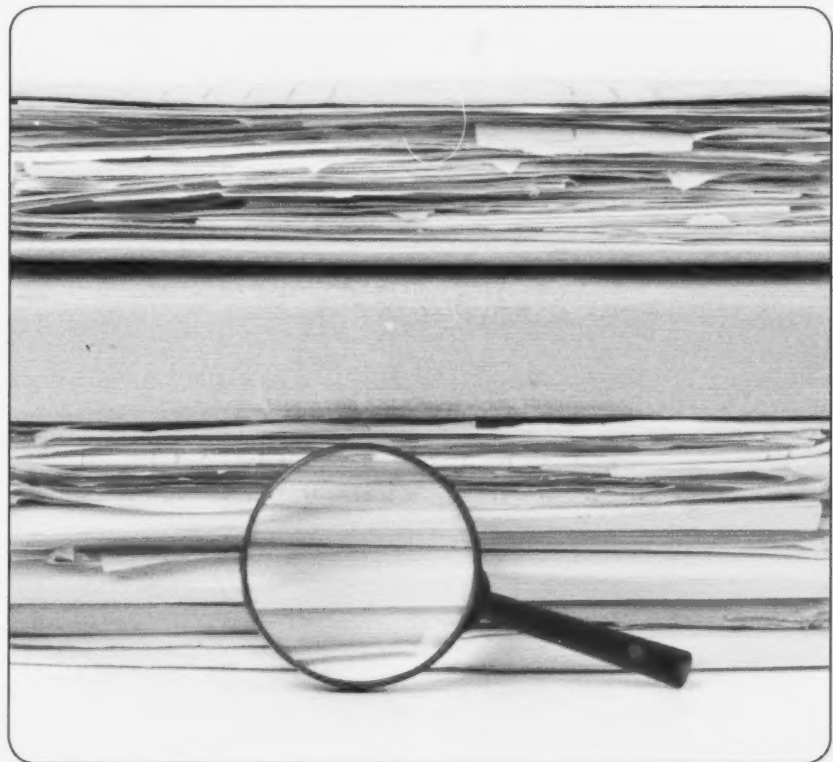
Thank you for recognizing a patient's unusual circumstances and providing an appropriate exception.

Karen Schmidt

*Team Leader, Applications
Unit, E-Health Saskatchewan*

Thank you for quickly reinstating health coverage for a patient who was in the process of replacing lost ID.

Systemic Reviews



Review in Progress

Ministry of Social Services

The Ministry of Social Services is responsible for a number of different programs, two of which are the Community Living Service Delivery (CLSD) program and the Child and Family Services (CFS) program. The main objective of the CLSD program is to ensure that the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) are met so they can function as independently as possible within their communities. The CFS program provides services to children and youth who require child protection and other assistance from the Ministry.

Over the last five years, Ombudsman Saskatchewan has received a number of complaints involving young people with ID/DD in care of the ministry who were "aging out" of care but as adults needed supports and services from the CLSD program. We had been told that the transition of these young people from the CFS to the CLSD program had been problematic. In December of 2012, Ombudsman Saskatchewan began a systemic review of the way these young people are transitioned between the CFS and CLSD programs. Our review is ongoing and our report will be released in 2014.

Workshops and Presentations



"Fine Art of Fairness" Workshops

In 2006, we piloted the first "Fine Art of Fairness" workshop for government employees. Since then, over 2,000 people have attended the workshops.

The agenda includes information about our office and what public servants need to know about fair decision-making.

In 2013, we conducted workshops for the following groups.

- Health Regions:
 - Sunrise Health Region
 - Keewatin Yatthe Health Region
 - Mamaweton Churchill River Health Region
- Ministry of Justice, Corrections & Public Safety
- Ministry of Labour Relations & Workplace Safety
- Ministry of Social Services, Regina (x4)
- Ministry of Social Services, Saskatoon (x3)
- Open Workshop for Government Employees, Regina (x2)
- Open Workshop for Health Sector Employees, Saskatoon
- Provincial Disaster Assistance Program
- Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming
- Saskatchewan Abilities Council

We were also invited to provide the workshop for some of our ombudsman colleagues:

- Office of the Correctional Investigator
- Offices of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, Veteran's Ombudsman, Procurement Ombudsman & Taxpayers' Ombudsman

The facilitators did an amazing job facilitating this workshop. The two days flew by. The material was very educational and informative and will have a positive impact on my work. I would definitely recommend "The Fine Art of Fairness" workshop to all managers, supervisors, and employees.

– Leanne Sauser, Sunrise Regional Health Authority

An excellent two day session on what fairness is and what it means to be fair. I felt the practical examples really helped me understand how I can bring this back to my work. I know my position will only benefit from this experience.

– Justine Scriver, Complaints Review Officer, Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime

Best government training I have ever attended; very informative and encourages one to provide excellent service to our clients.

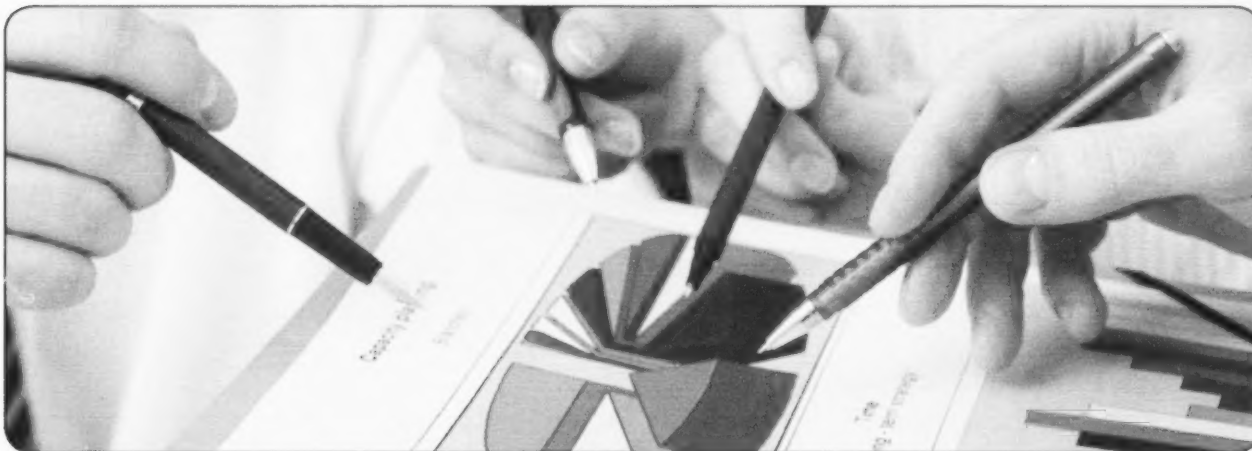
– Paul Thunberg, Assured Income Specialist, Ministry of Social Services

Presentations

In 2013, we participated in several conferences, meetings and events where we provided information to the public and to government employees about fairness, the work of our office and when to contact us. These included presentations to community organizations, speaking invitations at conferences, booths at various events and participation in staff training days.

- Automobile Injury Appeal Commission
- Children's International Summer Villages Camp
- Constituency Assistants (x2)
- Forum of Canadian Ombudsman Conference
- Health Care Quality Summit
- Heartland Health Region EMS
- HIV-HCV Nursing Education Organization
- Hope's Home
- Johnson Shoyama Graduate School, Program/Policy Evaluation Class
- Jubilee Residences
- Legislative Assembly Office
- Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Health & Social Services Division
- Ministry of Justice – Corrections and Policing:
 - Pine Grove Correctional Centre (x2)
 - Prince Albert Correctional Centre (x3)
 - Regina Correctional Centre (x2)
 - Saskatoon Correctional Centre
- Non-Profit Housing Forum
- Open Door Society, Saskatoon
- Pioneer Village
- Prince Albert Parkland Health Region
- Rainbow Youth Centre
- Regina Lutheran Home
- Saskatchewan EMS Association
- Saskatchewan Home Economics Teachers Association / Association of Saskatchewan Home Economists (SHETA / ASHE) Conference
- Saskatchewan Seniors' Mechanism
- Saskatchewan Student Leadership Conference
- Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (x2)
- SIAST, Community Learning for Success
- SIAST, Corrections Worker Training Program (x2)
- St. Joseph's Hospital
- St. Peter's Hospital
- United Way Regina
- University of Regina Career Fair (x2)

Statistics

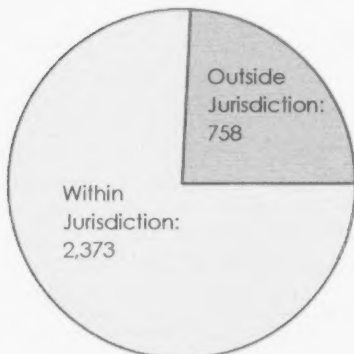


Tracking Files and Progress

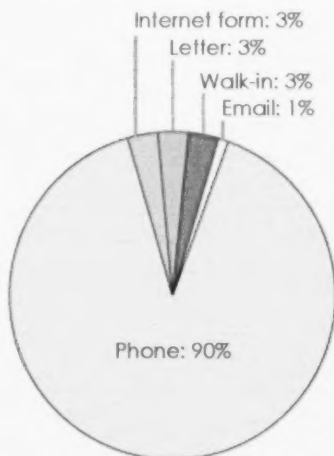
Receiving Files

Each day, we hear from people who are concerned about the impact a government service is having on their lives. Most queries fit within our jurisdiction, but a significant minority do not. In those instances, we take the time to redirect the person, as best we can, to the most appropriate office or service.

Overall in 2013, we received 2,373 complaints within our jurisdiction and 758 that were not.



How do people reach us? The vast majority contact us by phone, but there are several other methods of contact available, including mail, fax, walk-ins and a secure online form.



Time to Process Files

The time it takes to complete and close a file varies, depending on the circumstances and the amount of work required. Many can be closed within a few days, while others may

take several months. Overall, our goal is to complete most of our files within three to six months.

Files Closed Within 90 Days

Target: 90%
Actual: 95%

Files Closed Within 180 Days

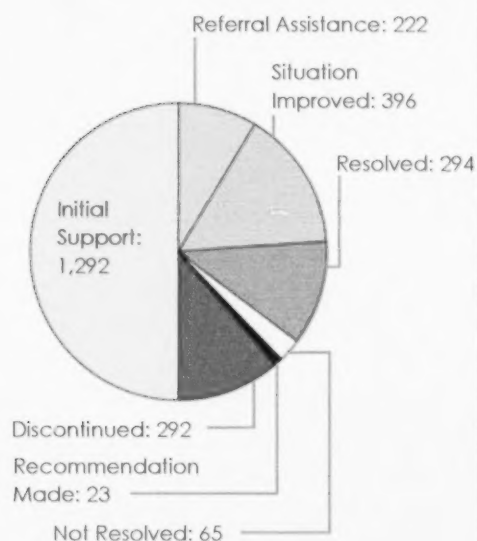
Target: 95%
Actual: 98%

Tracking Outcomes

Since each file is unique, service methods and outcomes may vary greatly. In some instances, we will coach the person to try an avenue of appeal that is available. In other instances, we may progress to a more formal investigation (review), complete with recommendations. Sometimes our role will be that of facilitator, to bring the individual and the government office together to work out a resolution.

Some complaints are complex and can be divided into more than one issue – and each issue can have a different outcome.

We can group the file outcomes for 2013 as follows:



We do not formally notify the applicable government office each time we receive a complaint. In many instances, the matter can be resolved quickly and informally, but in cases where we determine that a formal investigation (review) is the most appropriate route, the Ombudsman sends a notice letter to the Deputy Minister or CEO of the ministry or agency. As the review wraps up, the Ombudsman provides a second letter, outlining our findings and, when applicable, any tentative recommendations being considered. This provides the ministry or agency an opportunity to respond before recommendations are finalized.

While ministries and agencies are not required to follow our recommendations, most do. On files closed this year, of the 23 issues that resulted in recommendations, 46 recommendations were made, and all were accepted.

Glossary

Following are definitions of the terms used in the statistical charts on pages 20–31.

Complaints Received

The number of complaints received are counted from January 1 to December 31 of a given year. These complaints are considered within jurisdiction, although a very small number of them may later be determined not to be.

Complaints Closed

The complaints closed are counted from January 1 to December 31 of a given year. When we review each situation brought to our attention, we find that some contain multiple issues. Since each issue may have a different end result, each is closed separately and assigned an appropriate status.

Closed Account Statuses

Initial Support

Our office provided initial support for these complaints. For example, we may have linked the complainant to a more appropriate step – perhaps an appeal process not yet tried, an advocacy service, or an internal complaints process.

At this stage, we also encourage people to bring their complaint back to our office if they still feel there is an unfairness after they have tried all the appeal routes available.

Referral Assistance

After beginning a negotiation, mediation or investigation (review) process, we have referred the complainant to an appeal route they have not yet tried or a more appropriate remedy.

Situation Improved

The complainant may not consider the complaint to be completely resolved, but the situation has improved – perhaps for them and perhaps also for others who may encounter a similar situation.

Resolved

The complaint has been completely or largely resolved. This may mean that the complainant feels the complaint has largely been resolved, or that we have determined the complaint to be largely resolved.

Not Resolved

The complaint has not been resolved. For example, the complainant's situation is not significantly better and they remain dissatisfied with the government's decision or action, or there was no appropriate remedy available.

Recommendation Made

Our office has made one or more recommendations related to the issue identified. This includes recommendations that are accepted and rejected on files closed in the past year.

Discontinued

Our office or the complainant has chosen to withdraw or discontinue the complaint. This includes situations where we find, after some involvement, that the complaint is outside our jurisdiction.

Complaints Received		Ministries
2013	2012	
11	16	Advanced Education
2	4	Agriculture
0	1	Central Services <i>*The Public Service Commission is listed separately under commissions.</i>
8	10	Economy
4	6	Education
10	8	Environment
0	2	Executive Council
4	8	Finance
		Government Relations
6	20	Public Safety
10	5	Government Relations – Other
16	25	Totals – Government Relations
		Health
15	19	Drug Plan & Extended Benefits
33	48	Health – Other
48	67	Totals – Health
6	7	Highways and Infrastructure

Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
4	3	2	4	0	0	0
2	0	1	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	2	3	1	0	4
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	0	0	1	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	1	0	0	1
2	0	2	1	0	2	3
6	0	2	0	0	0	2
8	0	4	1	0	2	5
5	0	3	5	0	0	2
12	7	6	6	5	1	5
17	7	9	11	5	1	7
5	0	1	0	0	0	0

Complaints Received		Ministries
2013	2012	
		Justice
35	27	Adult Corrections – Pine Grove Correctional Centre
165	121	Adult Corrections – Prince Albert Correctional Centre
241	255	Adult Corrections – Regina Correctional Centre
177	161	Adult Corrections – Saskatoon Correctional Centre
15	28	Adult Corrections – Other
13	7	Corrections and Policing – Other
14	5	Court Services
32	34	Maintenance Enforcement Branch
19	14	Public Guardian and Trustee
40	37	Office of Residential Tenancies / Provincial Mediation Board
16	17	Justice – Other
767	706	Totals – Justice
33	25	Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
1	5	Parks, Culture and Sport
		Social Services
77	109	Child and Family Services
75	73	Housing
6	6	Income Assistance and Disability Services Division – Community Living Service Delivery
24	17	Income Assistance and Disability Services Division – Income Supplement Programs – Other
104	28	Income Assistance and Disability Services Division – Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability
440	564	Income Assistance and Disability Services Division – Saskatchewan Assistance Program
35	51	Income Assistance and Disability Services Division – Transitional Employment Allowance
8	11	Social Services – Other
769	859	Totals – Social Services

Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
22	0	3	4	2	0	11
82	10	26	34	10	0	20
103	17	46	57	11	0	23
77	15	48	24	7	0	19
12	0	3	2	1	3	1
2	1	2	1	0	0	4
7	0	3	2	0	0	2
17	3	8	2	0	0	3
13	0	1	1	0	0	3
24	1	9	3	1	1	7
15	0	0	0	0	0	1
374	47	149	130	32	4	94
18	4	8	0	0	3	5
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
65	2	4	3	1	0	5
35	8	12	4	1	0	15
2	0	4	3	0	1	0
8	5	9	1	0	0	5
55	14	18	13	2	2	13
231	65	70	66	0	0	45
16	3	3	11	0	0	8
3	1	4	0	0	0	4
415	98	124	101	4	3	95

Complaints Received		Boards	
2013	2012		
0	1	Farmland Security Board	
5	9	Highway Traffic Board	
1	1	Labour Relations Board	
1	0	Public and Private Rights Board	
0	2	Saskatchewan Arts Board	
1	2	Saskatchewan Municipal Board	
1	0	Saskatchewan Pension Plan	
7	1	Saskatchewan Social Services Appeal Board	
2	1	Social Services Regional Appeal Committees	
1	1	Surface Rights Arbitration Board	
1	0	Water Appeal Board	
107	121	Workers' Compensation Board	

Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	1	1	2	1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	1	0	0	0	1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	1	3	0	0	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
85	11	5	1	4	2	7

Complaints Received		Regional Health Authorities and Entities	
2013	2012		
		Regional Health Authorities	
	2	1	Athabasca Regional Health Authority
	5	2	Cypress Regional Health Authority
	9	4	Five Hills Regional Health Authority
	2	0	Heartland Regional Health Authority
	1	4	Keewatin Regional Health Authority
	3	4	Kelsey Trail Regional Health Authority
	3	3	Mamawetan Churchill River Regional Health Authority
	5	6	Prairie North Regional Health Authority
	15	6	Prince Albert Parkland Regional Health Authority
	25	29	Regina Qu'Appelle Regional Health Authority
	43	42	Saskatoon Regional Health Authority
	2	2	Sun Country Regional Health Authority
	9	4	Sunrise Regional Health Authority
124	107	Totals – Regional Health Authorities	
		Health Entities*	
		* These entities are grouped and listed based on the health region in which they are located and not on their governance structure.	
	3	0	Health Entities in the Five Hills Region
	1	0	Health Entities in the Prairie North Region
	0	2	Health Entities in the Prince Albert Parkland Region
	4	0	Health Entities in the Regina Qu'Appelle Region
	12	5	Health Entities in the Saskatoon Region
	1	0	Health Entities in the Sun Country Region
21	7	Totals – Health Entities by Region	

Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	0	1	0	0	0
4	1	1	1	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	1	0	0	0
9	2	3	1	2	0	0
16	1	3	2	4	0	2
27	15	4	3	0	2	8
2	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	2	0	3	1	0	2
74	23	11	12	7	2	13
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	2	0	0	0
1	0	1	0	0	0	0
8	2	4	0	0	0	1
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	2	5	2	0	0	1

Complaints Received		Crown Corporations
2013	2012	
1	0	Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority
6	9	Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan
5	2	Liquor and Gaming Authority
4	8	Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
		Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI)
38	41	Auto Fund
71	78	Claims Division – Auto Claims
46	59	Claims Division – No Fault Insurance
41	25	Claims Division – Other / SGI Canada
5	16	SGI – Other
201	219	Totals – SGI
2	2	Saskatchewan Transportation Company
15	27	SaskEnergy
1	1	SaskGaming
71	80	SaskPower
51	63	SaskTel
0	1	SaskWater
11	6	Water Security Agency

Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1	1	4	0	0	0	0
2	1	1	0	0	0	1
2	0	1	0	1	0	2
26	1	7	0	2	0	3
55	3	4	6	1	1	3
34	7	5	0	0	0	2
36	1	1	1	1	0	4
6	0	0	0	2	0	1
157	12	17	7	6	1	13
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	1	2	0	0	0	2
0	1	0	0	0	0	0
26	7	20	10	0	0	9
19	2	15	4	1	0	16
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	1	4	1	0	0	2

Complaints Received		Commissions
2013	2012	
2	4	Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission
2	2	Automobile Injury Appeal Commission
1	7	Public Service Commission
5	7	Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission
32	41	Saskatchewan Legal Aid Commission
4	5	Saskatchewan Public Complaints Commission

Complaints Received		Agencies and Other Organizations
2013	2012	
0	1	Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency
1	4	Saskatchewan Cancer Agency
1	0	Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts
0	1	Saskatchewan College of Midwives
0	1	Saskatchewan Human Rights Tribunal
6	2	Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAT)

Complaints Received		Totals – All Categories
2013	2012	
2,373	2,495	

Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
0	0	2	0	1	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	1
1	0	0	0	1	1	0
3	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	0	6	1	0	0	7
3	0	0	0	0	0	1

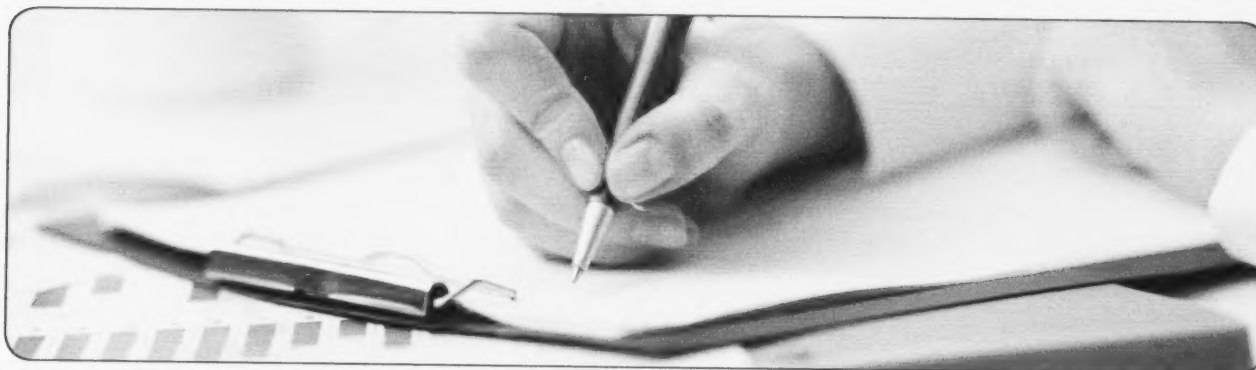
Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	2	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	1	0	0	0	0

Complaints Closed in 2013

Initial Support	Referral Assistance	Situation Improved	Resolved	Not Resolved	Recommendation Made	Discontinued
1,292	222	396	294	65	23	292

Budget



		2011-2012 Audited Financial Statement*	2012-2013 Audited Financial Statement*	2013-2014 Budget**
REVENUE				
	General Revenue	\$2,887,659	\$3,037,550	\$3,594,000
	Fund appropriation			
	Miscellaneous	\$23	\$93	
TOTAL REVENUE		\$2,887,682	\$3,037,643	\$3,594,000
EXPENSES				
	Salaries & benefits	\$2,161,323	\$2,393,628	\$2,494,000
	Office space & equipment rental	\$220,200	\$223,581	\$296,100
	Communication	\$28,696	\$28,343	\$32,500
	Misc. services	\$73,839	\$80,767	\$86,500
	Office supplies & expenses	\$23,743	\$22,310	\$28,000
	Advertising, promotion & events	\$146,866	\$97,732	\$103,600
	Travel	\$68,699	\$73,935	\$89,900
	Amortization	\$32,928	\$23,414	-
	Dues & fees	\$67,671	\$52,510	\$113,300
	Repairs & maintenance	\$45,162	\$43,469	\$50,100
	Capital Asset Acquisitions	-	-	\$300,000
	Loss on disposal of capital assets	-	\$168	-
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$2,869,127	\$3,039,857	\$3,594,000
ANNUAL (DEFICIT) SURPLUS		\$18,555	(\$2,214)	

*These columns are based on our audited financial statements, which follow our fiscal year (April - March) and our annual report follows the calendar year. The audited financial statements are available on our website at www.ombudsman.sk.ca.

**Due to the timing of this report, 2013-14 numbers reflect the budgeted amount rather than the actual.

Staff



Regina Office

Kevin Fenwick, Ombudsman
(January - June)

Gregory Sykes, General Counsel

Janet Mirwaldt, Deputy Ombudsman
(January - July); Acting Ombudsman
(July - December)

Brian Calder, Assistant Ombudsman

Jaime Carlson, Assistant Ombudsman

Kelly Chessie, Assistant Ombudsman

Sherry Davis, Assistant Ombudsman

Arlene Harris, Assistant Ombudsman

Pat Lyon, Assistant Ombudsman
(Term)

Aaron Orban, Assistant Ombudsman/
Public Interest Disclosure Investigator

Carol Spencer, Complaints Analyst

Leila Dueck, Director of
Communications

Beverley Yuen, Executive
Administrative Assistant

Azteca Landry,
Administrative Assistant
(Permanent Part-Time)

Saskatoon Office

Joni Sereda, Deputy Ombudsman
(January - August)

Renée Gavigan, Acting Program
Manager, Intake (January - July);
Acting Deputy Ombudsman (July -
December)

Christy Bell, Assistant Ombudsman

Jeff Cain, Assistant Ombudsman

Kerry O'Shea, Assistant Ombudsman

Sherry Pelletier, Assistant Ombudsman

Karen Topolinski, Assistant
Ombudsman

Rob Walton, Assistant Ombudsman

Adrienne Jacques, Complaints Analyst

Diane Totland, Complaints Analyst

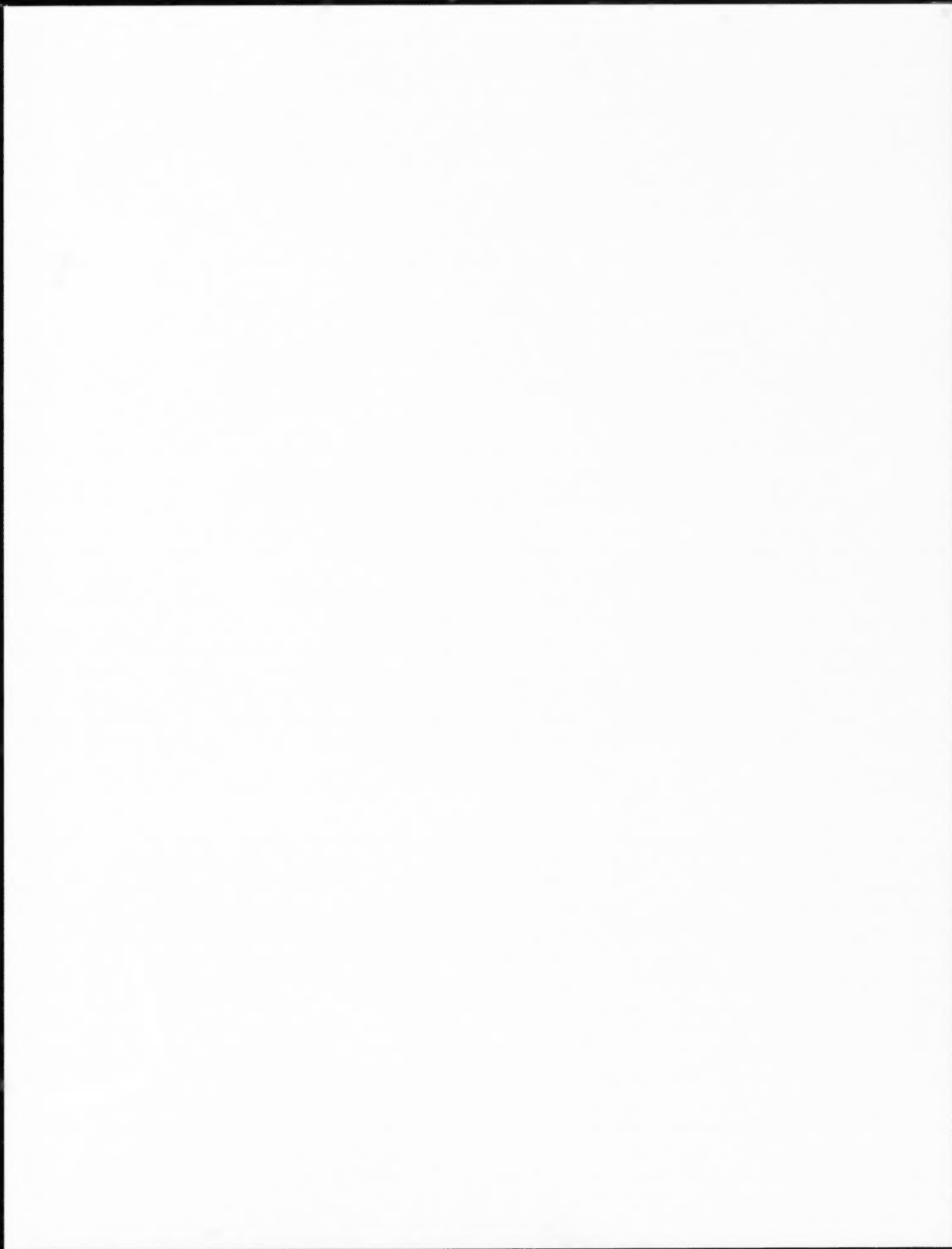
Kathy Upton, Complaints Analyst

Andrea Smandych,
Manager of Administration

Tricia Chint,
Administrative Assistant
(Permanent Part-Time)

Ryan Kennedy,
Administrative Assistant
(Permanent Part-Time)





promoting fairness